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CONDITIONS REQUISITE TO OUR SUCCESS IN THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL
SOCIETY, FEBRUARY 20, 1901.

BY

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A famous zoologist once said to me: "Human actions are determined to the extent of 90 per cent. by heredity, of 9 per cent. by environment, and only to the extent of 1 per cent. by free will." He spoke as an expert student of evolution. That I am not, but such observations as I have been able to make tend to confirm his paradoxical conclusion. Nations only partly resemble individuals, because in communities there is more or less open disagreement between the discordant elements which go to make up the whole. Yet of nations as well as of individuals it is true that under given conditions they will obey impulses which are in fact irresistible, though their action seems voluntary when superficially considered.

The United States has established itself in the Philippine Islands. The manner of their acquisition from the power which formerly owned them appeals to the imagination of the people of the Union. The opposition which the natives have made to our occupation of the islands has aroused the doggedness of our Teutonic race; and the task of developing the immense resources of the archipelago appeals most congenially to a nation descended from pioneers. The States of this Union will retain possession of the Philippines. The American people really could not give them up; for, as the colloquial phrase aptly puts it, we are not "built that way." To our retention of them there is great and even passionate opposition on the part of those who do not share in the national temperament. To gauge the efficacy of this opposition, fancy that the President were to send to Congress a message recommending our abandonment of the archipelago. The roar of protest which would then arise would be to the murmur now audible as a typhoon to a zephyr.

Thus, irrespective of individual opinions on the wisdom of acquiring territory in the Far East, it is reasonable that our people should turn their attention to a study of the ways and means by which our East Indian possession may be rendered tranquil and prosperous.

In such a study information is the first essential, for many misconceptions are current. Much that is true has been said or written of the Philippines and their inhabitants; but it requires knowledge and skill somewhat like an expert's to know whither to turn for the truth and how to discriminate it. I spent 14 months in various portions of the archipelago on a mission of inquiry, and that is my excuse for attempting to throw some light upon the beclouded way.

As is well known, the first inhabitants of the Philippines of whom traces now remain were the Negritos, a race of black dwarfs with customs marking the lowest stage of culture. As a rule they have no habitations, sleeping where night overtakes them. They use poisoned arrows, and it is said that most of them can count no more than 5. It is not equally well known that when the Spaniards first came in contact with them they all spoke a single language. Only a few Negritos now remain, in scattered bands, numbering, it is thought, some 25,000 in all. Politically they have no importance whatever. The Filipinos with whom we have to do are chiefly of Malay blood, somewhat admixed, to be sure, with that of other races, but still substantially Malay.* These people invaded the country from the southwest; wave after wave of incursionists reached the islands, much as the Danes and Saxons descended upon the British coasts, and with analogous results. Each fresh invading horde sought to conquer a region for itself, either from the Negritos or from preceding invaders. They must have come from various localities and have entertained little feeling of kinship for one another; for they spoke, as they still speak, many languages, all of them indeed of the Malay family, yet mutually unintelligible. More than 60 such languages still survive—the clearest evidence of past political disunion; 60 languages without counting dialects, in an area smaller than that of New Mexico. Nothing but persistent enmity and non-intercourse could have preserved such linguistic variety. Yet this by no means measures the political diversities which existed when Magellan discovered the Philippines. Among the Visayans who then spoke and still speak only one language, though numerous dialects, he found various communities openly hostile to one another, and it was in one of the petty wars between different bands of the Visayan tribe that the great Captain lost his life.

From the utter lack of culture represented by the Negritos upwards almost every age of civilization is represented in the Philippines. In eastern Mindanao a heathen tribe, called the Manobos,

* In Mindanao there are some wild tribes of Indonesians, who have a larger share of Caucasian blood than the ordinary Malays.

practice ceremonial cannibalism and offer to their gods human sacrifices. In northern Luzón, too, there are head-hunting tribes, and some of these also have been accused of cannibalism, though, so far as I can discover, without sufficient proof. Even among the Visayas there seem to have been somewhat recently anthropophagous tribes. The Mohammedans stand on a considerably higher plane of culture than do the pagans, but their religion is said to be a very corrupt form of the faith of Islam, and they are at best semi-civilized. The Christian faith includes all the communities which can be called civilized, and a good many to which that term is applicable only by courtesy. Fortunately the Christian communities are far more populous than either of the others. No exact data exist, but it is supposed that about three-fourths of the population of the islands are Christian, and that they occupy about three-fifths of the territory. It is sometimes assumed that only the Christians of the archipelago need to be considered, because of the relatively small numbers of the unchristianized tribes; but this seems to me very doubtful. The pagans have been able to adhere to the faith of their fathers, a species of ancestor worship, because of their warlike character and the inaccessibility of the regions which they inhabit. As for the Moros, their holy law is a gospel of war, and it will be the easiest thing in the world to rouse them to fury. Thus far, however, they have shown a very friendly disposition to the United States, thanks to judicious treatment, initiated by General Bates.

That hostile feelings should exist between the pagans, the Mohammedans, and the Christians of the Philippines is at least very intelligible; but there are enmities also between Christian tribes. The Ilocanos, Pangasinanes, Pampangas, and Macabebes all detest the Tagalogs, who, indeed, are much disliked even by the relatively peaceful Visayans.

These facts are common knowledge, and it would not be worth while to state them here if they did not point to an inference which is as evident as it is important. There is no such thing as a Filipino people, and there never has been one since the Negritos were driven out of the choicer part of the country. The intertribal relations in the Philippines prior to their discovery by Magellan were very like those which prevailed until the last century among the North American Indians, and the diversity of language is, in the one case as in the other, a lasting evidence of the political chaos which existed. The only common bond between the Filipino tribes has been their partial or complete subjection to the Spanish Crown. Nothing but conquest will ever unify them.

That the Filipinos share with one another certain traits of character is certain, but the likeness is often exaggerated by observers new to the archipelago, who fail to discriminate the diversities included under the general type. The communities which make up the population of the Philippines bear no greater resemblance to one another than do the peasantries of Italy, Russia, Spain, and Germany. Temperament and customs divide them as well as language.

The vast majority of the Christian Filipinos are substantially illiterate peasants, who know little and care less about any tribe excepting that to which they belong, and who speak no other language than their own. I say they are substantially illiterate because, although many of them can read a little, practically the only books which exist in the native languages are elementary devotional tracts prepared by the priests. To this statement the Tagalog is a partial exception, a few volumes of poetry and other literature having been printed in that language. Yet those who read habitually or frequently read Spanish by preference, and not the native language. It fell to me to procure for General Otis a translation of his proclamation of January, 1899, into Tagalog. I found great difficulty in securing a trustworthy and orthodox version, for the most prominent natives of Manila, lawyers and physicians, and men of much culture, confessed to me that they possessed no critical knowledge of literary Tagalog, and read it with some difficulty. Away from the larger cities the Spaniards discouraged the aspirations of natives to master Spanish, and even a few miles from the capital it is often hard to find persons who understand that language. Mr. Aguinaldo himself speaks Spanish with difficulty, and ill. In fact, outside of a few of the largest towns, it is only among the higher officials and the capitalists that Spanish is spoken with ease, and these are thus the only persons to whom the news or the learning of the world is accessible. It is among these better-educated Filipinos that the warmest friends of the United States are to be found, men who have something at stake and who know something of the world.

These facts show that there is no such thing as public opinion in the Philippine Islands in the sense in which that term might be used of any homogeneous race, or of a community with a homogeneous civilization.

The revolutionary sentiments which have found such loud and, sometimes, eloquent expression originate with a very limited class, composed chiefly of Chinese *mestizos*, or mixed breeds. This cross constitutes a small but important element of the population. The

Chinese mestizo is the only half-breed in the world who considers himself very much superior to either of his parents. In truth, he is an intelligent and energetic man, and sometimes also a good one. Many of these mestizos, however, entertain the strongest antipathy to everything of European origin, and are extremely unscrupulous in their methods of pursuing their aims. They also overrate their ability in the conduct of public affairs. They have sought to establish an oligarchy in the Philippines, and in the attempt they have demonstrated, even to their own people, their administrative incapacity.

Gen. James Franklin Bell and I have a friend—a Filipino woman—who occupies a very responsible position in a large business establishment. She formerly had strong sympathy with the cause of “independence.” Lately she has informed the General that she would rather see any government on earth assume charge of the Philippines, even the Chinese government, than take her chances under native rule, and this she has frankly been telling her countrymen. You may wonder that I quote a woman on such a subject, but ordinarily a Filipino woman is brighter than her husband, and I know of no other country where women exert an equal amount of influence. The experience of Negros in self-government is most instructive. I was on that island when the native government was organizing in May and June, 1899, with assistance, indeed, from the United States, but without any compulsion or interference. I even had a little to do with smoothing the way for the new administration at Damaguete, Negros Occidental, and thus came closely in contact with the leading officials. They seemed to me both well meaning and able. I thought they had a fair chance of success under our protection, and it was certainly a better chance than the natives could have enjoyed in any other Christian province. The attempt was a failure, however, and the Negrenos had to fall back upon the Americans and request them to organize and conduct a stable and orderly civil government. Englishmen of long residence even declare that the natives have too little respect for men of their own race to submit peaceably to them. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to convey to any audience in this country the impression of political incapacity which the Filipinos produce on almost every one who is thrown intimately in contact with them for a considerable period. Any close observer finds among them a lack of the sense of responsibility and an absence of settled principles of action not dissimilar to those with which we are familiar among American boys in their teens. A community of our boys left wholly

to themselves, without guidance or restraint, would soon come to grief, while the same boys, properly advised, might do very creditably; and so may the Filipinos.

If the Philippines were to be left to themselves now, it is clear enough what would happen. War would break out at once in various directions. The Moros would not merely renew their piratical raids, suppressed less than half a century ago, but carry on an active propaganda for the faith at the point of the sword; instant conversion or instant death. The tribes of Luzón would not submit to Tagalog rule unless first conquered, and each petty chieftain of a guerrilla band would fight for his own band, hoping to emerge from the chaos as dictator of the country. Before absolute anarchy was attained, however, some strong power would step in and teach the Filipinos to weep for the departed Americans.

The insurrection of February 4, 1899, was not a surprise. The probability of such an outbreak had been evident for months, but it was hoped that better counsels would prevail in the native camp. Everything possible was done to avoid giving even specious provocation to the natives. Our military government and our men showed the utmost forbearance under gross provocation from the Filipinos. This I know from observation, and because I was in a position to learn officially all that went on. In fact, I was acting as first assistant in the Bureau of Military Information, and enjoyed the full confidence of my chief, Major Bell, now, for extraordinary merit, promoted Brigadier General. The attack took place on the evening of February 4. As fast as horses could get us there Major Bell and I made our way to the Nebraska line, where the first shot was fired, and we remained there, or on adjacent portions of the line, throughout the engagements of the night. The circumstances of the collision were investigated immediately, rigorously, and with full authority, only about half an hour after it occurred. The gallant Col. Stotsenburg (who died the finest of deaths a few weeks afterwards, at the head of his regiment) gave us full information with military frankness and terseness. So also did other officers, and there was no conflict of statement or opinion. I heard Major Bell dictate in the dark every word of his lucid dispatch on the subject to the Military Governor, the telegraph tent being under a fire so heavy that no light could be burned. It is superfluous to say that the account thus obtained was precisely that given by General Otis in his dispatches and his annual report. The outbreak was a wanton and deliberate attack of the Insurgent forces on those of the United States, with no color of provocation on the part of the Nebraska regiment. The attempt

was made to force our sentry for the evident purpose of drawing his fire. He did simply his duty, not omitting due challenges before maintaining his post with the weapon entrusted to him for that very purpose. The Insurgents were only waiting for this signal and instantly responded with volleys.

Between our forbearance and the lies which their leaders had disseminated, the rank and file of the Insurgents really believed us cowards. They actually boasted before the outbreak that one Filipino could whip five Yankees, and they were confident that they should sweep us all into the bay that night. It is one of the many excellent traits of the Filipino that he despises cowardice. He is so old-fashioned as still to believe personal courage essential in the members of a ruling class. Hence, when once the impression had got abroad that Americans were cowards, quiet in the Philippines was impossible without a preliminary conflict. May the Filipino never lower his standard, or have cause to be disappointed in American bravery.

The insurrection in the Philippines has lasted much longer than most people thought probable. It is, indeed, almost impossible to free forecasts of future events from every tinge of hopefulness. Nearly all wars and insurrections have lasted longer than it was believed they would last. The Germans supposed the Franco-Prussian war at an end when the battle of Sedan had been fought; we thought trouble in the South over when Lee surrendered. In most cases the field of war is fertile enough to bear an aftermath which must be harvested. Our authorities, in forecasting the future, did not sufficiently count upon the sustaining effect of the support which the insurrection has received from a small but vociferous section of our own people. This was particularly thrust upon my attention, because I was ordered to read and report daily upon the newspapers published by Mr. Aguinaldo's adherents, and these were full of it. The natives frankly told me eighteen months ago that they proposed to fight on till the fall elections, and if those should go against their partisans, they would try to hold out till the Presidential election. This has turned out to be true. Organized opposition, in any proper military sense, ended a year ago; but irregular warfare has continued, and made long casualty lists. Some people refuse to believe that anti-imperialism has really stimulated the opposition of the Filipinos; yet it has done so beyond a peradventure, and the fact is perfectly explicable to any one who is in the least familiar with the conditions. The Filipinos are entirely unaccustomed to free speech, and the abuses of which it is capable. To

their minds the fact that diatribes against the Government could be printed in this country, was conclusive evidence that the party in power was at the point of collapse and unable to suppress attacks. The anti-imperialistic agitation has been hard on the American soldier, and harder still on the Filipino; but it has had its peculiar advantages, for it has enabled a number of gentlemen to demonstrate to their own satisfaction how much holier they are than their fellow-citizens. They have built about themselves shrines of skulls.

The insurrection, however, might have been ended earlier in spite of American support. From a purely military point of view, greater severity would have been advantageous. Had the laws of war been rigidly enforced, had prisoners been closely interned, had spies and those who violated parole been promptly shot, there is every reason to believe that opposition would have been crushed out ere this. I am very glad it has been otherwise. No war in the world was ever waged so humanely and magnanimously as we have conducted this. Furthermore, I have, from most excellent sources, information that the Filipinos appreciate this fact. Thanks to the mildness of our commanding generals, when peace is at last fully established there will be no residual bitterness and hatred to overcome. The Filipinos do not hate us now, and if we treat them under civil government with as much fairness and generosity as the army has shown them, they will be and remain loyal subjects of the Union.

The average native has long been sick of war and ready for peace. Wonder is often expressed that, if this be true, there is not an apparent reaction in our favor. But this is not strange at all. Only the Americans and the Insurgents possess firearms. Under Spanish rule natives were not permitted to have them, and the insurgents have found great difficulty in procuring even the limited number now in their hands. A native not permanently resident in a garrisoned town, who is known to be in sympathy with the Americans, is thus completely at the mercy of the Insurgents. Furthermore, though as a rule, to which there have been some exceptions, the hostile Indians have treated American prisoners with humanity, they are merciless to natives believed to oppose the insurrection. Prudent native sympathizers with the United States have therefore awaited the cessation of hostilities.

The Administration and the commanding officers of our military services have been pitilessly criticised for their alleged blunders. It would seem, indeed, according to the critics, that our leaders

are so phenomenally perverse as never by any chance to do right or well. The assumption is constantly made that there has been some possible plan of action in the Philippines attended by no inconveniences or drawbacks. There never has been a complex transaction which would not have gone off more smoothly had the responsible leaders been gifted with supernatural foresight. This the critics of the national policy certainly are not, and I do not believe that any set of men exist who could have conducted affairs in the Philippine Islands with fewer or less important mistakes than have been made. Had we returned Manila to the Spaniards, or abandoned the islands to Mr. Aguinaldo, or sold them to a European power, the sum of human misery involved would have been far greater than it has been, even without reckoning the humiliation which such a policy would have entailed upon the people of these forty-five United States. A conflict with the natives was inevitable from the start, though at first we did not know it, and had no means of ascertaining it. It has been conducted on what a very few military critics scoff at as "the lovey-dovey system," a system of which we have every reason to be proud. It is the system consistently favored by our generals, and which has been loyally carried out by their subordinates, even those who took a more purely military view of the best policy.

The officers of our united services have acquitted themselves with all possible credit. No military glory of the highest order, to be sure, is obtainable in a war with semi-civilized peoples, for the most brilliant feats of strategy do not enter into such a contest. But the finest tactical ability has been shown, and admirable efficiency, accompanied by inexhaustible courage. Nearly as important has been the adaptability displayed by our officers, and their simple-minded devotion to any duty, whether technically military or not. No one but the few who have seen it will ever appreciate the tact and good judgment manifested by officers of our army in keeping order in Filipino communities, where mildness was essential and the exercise of arbitrary power indispensable. Nothing but genius or careful training suffices to teach men the skilful and humane use of arbitrary power. To this an officer in either service is educated from boyhood, and, as far as opportunity offered, the officers of the navy, including the lieutenants in command of vessels of the mosquito fleet, have demonstrated the value of this training, as well as the officers of the army. It is time now to introduce civil government in portions of the archipelago, but I trust that a goodly share of the offices may be temporarily filled by military

officers, and that the civilians associated with them may study their methods of using, without abusing, power.

Some people fear the growth of the army and of the military spirit in this country. They must be thinking of a military spirit very different, indeed, from that which prevails in our services. There is not in the United States or in its territories and dependencies any body of men which compares with the officers of our army and navy in the combination of qualities they display—upright and intelligent devotion to duty, appreciation of the rights and liberties of American citizens, and thorough-going patriotism. Why, if the people would only study it and profit by it, the cost of the army would be repaid by the object-lesson it affords in merely civic virtues! Our military forces have earned in the Philippines all the credit which the situation made possible. Furthermore, they have kept the flag clean. I do not mean to assert that no individual on the rolls or the roster of the army of the United States has done anything discreditable. The entire suppression of crime and misdemeanor has never been accomplished in any populous community, civil or military. But the criminal acts of individuals committed in contravention of orders no more defile the Stars and Stripes than the rabid assertions of slanderous writers concerning the “pollution” of the flag befoul anything except their own reputations and environment.

Peace seems to be approaching in the archipelago, and the questions which will soon press for solution are many. How are we to let in upon the Filipino tribes the light of our own civilization, the best we have, be it absolutely good or bad? Our own experience answers the question—roads and schools. Wagon-roads, trolleys, and railroads, must be built as fast as possible, either at public expense or, better, on franchises carefully guarded against monopoly. Primary schools and grammar schools must be started everywhere, with instruction for all the higher grades in the English language from the moment when the children are able to comprehend sentences in our own tongue. For higher instruction let the Filipinos be encouraged and assisted to come to the United States, in order that they may learn our manner of life as well as our books. They already manifest a desire to do so by sending young men to our schools, and the more that come the better for them and for us.

The lands of the religious orders ought clearly to be purchased. Only so can treaty obligations be observed and a source of grievous irritation in Filipino communities be removed. It seems to me

the true policy for the United States to buy these properties, the cost to be reimbursed by the government of the Philippines gradually, and from the revenues obtained from the lands. Mr. John R. Proctor aptly suggests the application to these lands and to the entire public domain in the Philippines, of the system of government leases, in part perpetual, which is meeting with such brilliant success in New Zealand. It does away with all disputes as to title, and absolutely bars the accumulation of holdings acquired for the sake of an "unearned increment."

Laws and regulations governing the Philippines require most delicate handling and a thorough knowledge of the conditions. The fiscal policy suitable to, or popular in, the States would not be adapted, at least for the present, to the needs of our Asiatic possessions. The Philippines are and must ever remain chiefly agricultural; and, although factories will spring up in time, our first object should be to foster much-needed prosperity on the industrial lines to which the people is wonted. For the present they should have a tariff for revenue only, and if industries there are ever to be protected, taxes for that purpose should be introduced very cautiously, with consideration for the people as a whole.

The great diversity in temperament, religion, and civilization among various tribes also makes it essential that the government of the Philippines should have, under due but not excessive checks, a free hand in framing laws. A holy war with Mahomedans is always a formidable matter, because it is the ambition of the followers of the prophet to die on the field of battle. It is also easy in mere ignorance to give offence to Mahomedans which they will regard as a *casus belli*. With their religion we have nothing to do. It may be possible by diplomatic treatment to keep at peace with them and to procure the abolition among them of the mild form of servitude which they maintain, something utterly different from slavery as we are accustomed to think of it, and resembling rather the feudal system of Europe in the Middle Ages. The pagan Igorrotes, Irayas, Manobos, and many other tribes will require very different treatment each from the other and all from the Moros. It will be an immense job, requiring all the ability and nerve of our own best young men as local advisory residents or as provincial governors for its successful accomplishment, as well as free and steady hands at the helm in Manila. Not only our own men but our women also in the Philippines should be fully occupied in public affairs. As I have said, the Filipino women are both intelligent and influential. They can be most easily reached through our own women, who

should seek to gain their confidence and to exert themselves systematically for the good of both races.

By all means let Congress enact only the most indispensable laws, defining the relations of the Manila government to the suzerain. Give the Philippines a territorial charter, but one in which freedom of action is secured to the responsible officials representing the Home Government, a freedom corresponding to the responsibility which only they can adequately sustain.

Above all things, let every decent man see to it that merit, merit only, shall control the selection of American officials charged with fostering the civilization and development of the youthful people with whose wellbeing we have charged ourselves. When an American community is ill-governed I care little. The remedy is always in the hands of the members of the community, and if they are so supine, or so busy with their private affairs, as to submit to extortion or ill-treatment, they deserve what they get, and the more they smart for their neglect the sooner they will be aroused. With a dependent or less competent people it is far otherwise. All the millions stolen by the Tweed ring are of trifling importance compared with the few score thousands shamefully peculated in Cuba by officials of the Post Office Department. The pillory and the whipping-post are too good for such scoundrels. The very essence and gist of our success in the Philippines is to send to them as representatives of the United States our cleanest, most intelligent, and ablest men; men who recognize that the highest destiny which can possibly fall to the lot of a real man is to serve his country honorably and successfully. The Philippine Commission contains men of the right stamp, and the Administration is striving to adhere to the merit system in its selection of other officials.

Let us, the public, see to it that honorable and able service meets with due appreciation, while vilification is reserved for evil-doers, and it will soon become the fashion for honorably ambitious youths to seek service in the Philippines. Then will the reflex action on our own body politic reward us for all the trouble and anxiety the archipelago has cost us, and we shall turn with delight to the contemplation of a prosperous and loyal Philippine community, at last and for the first time a real Filipino people, making full use of the fairest area among the possessions of the United States.